

Pinard thinks that the *esprits libres*, more especially scientists and men of learning, ought gradually to adopt another practice which might be regarded as preliminary to cremation; namely, the dedication of their bodies to medical schools for purposes of study and dissection. The present extreme scarcity of anatomic specimens, which are absolutely indispensable for medical study, creates a peril which is constantly increasing. If all bodies are taken to the cemetery, none remain to serve for postmortem investigations and purposes of dissection. It is therefore the duty of the cremationists to bring about a reaction against the prejudice that it is a disgrace for one's body to be taken to the postmortem amphitheater before it is cremated. If our students should become entirely dependent on illustrations in gaining a knowledge of anatomy, it is to be feared that medicine and surgery will suffer a period of retrogression for which the living will have to pay heavily. In order to ward off this danger, apostles must needs rise up to point out the way of salvation. In this connection, it may be stated that Pinard has the great satisfaction of having secured the consent of his family that his body shall be turned over to a medical school, for purposes of study and dissection, before it is cremated. He expresses the hope that others may take similar action.

The Rockefeller Foundation and the Exchange of Sanitary Personnel

The exchange of sanitary personnel, a plan suggested by the League of Nations Health Conference and for which the financial cooperation of the Rockefeller Foundation has been assured (*THE JOURNAL*, Aug. 5, 1922, p. 485), will probably be begun the coming October. For a period of two weeks, functionaries of various nationalities—a Bulgarian, two Belgians, two Czechs, five Italians, five Poles, five Russians and two Serbians—will pursue an intensive short course at Brussels, following which they will spend two months in the public health services of different countries.

A Communication on Beethoven's Deafness

At the tenth international congress of otology, recently held in Paris, Dr. G. Canuyt of Strasbourg presented a communication on the deafness of Beethoven, which had its onset when the composer was 26 years old. At the age of 38, Beethoven had become completely deaf; he died at the age of 57. He was probably affected by a progressive type of bilateral sclerotic otitis. This diagnosis seems the most likely, judging from his personal statements, the clinical history of the affection, the results of necropsy and the accounts of his friends. Canuyt raised the question as to the effect of Beethoven's deafness on his work as a composer. He thinks that the sublime works of the great musician were written while he was in great pain. It was in this silence of night that he created his last five sonatas, his last six quartets, the Mass in D and the Ninth Symphony. Beethoven dwelt in a realm above mankind because he was separated from the world.

MADRID

(From Our Regular Correspondent)

Aug. 12, 1922.

Housing Problem

As a result of the rise in prices of construction materials and the constant increase in the cost of labor, coupled with shorter working hours and lowered efficiency, building operations have practically ceased in Madrid, and a period of much suffering is anticipated as regards men employed in the building trades, who, by the way, comprise the majority of workers in Madrid. Labor, aroused to this danger, is trying to center the attention of the public on the menace

arising from crowding in the poorer sections of the city. Dr. Milla recently gave a lecture at the Casa del Pueblo (workingmen's hall) in which he dwelt on the unhealthfulness and expensiveness of lodgings in Madrid. He showed that crowding was one of the causes responsible for the high death rate. The Madrid death rate has ranged, in the last few years, between 27 and 30 per thousand; while in any country in which there is proper sanitation it should not exceed 15 per thousand. Madrid has, therefore, a mortality 50 per cent. higher than towns of this type in Europe and America. The number of houses (buildings) in Madrid is 14,977, while the number of lodgings or residences is 158,813, which gives a proportion of 6.43 persons to each lodging. In La Inclusa district, 100,000 people live in 932 buildings, with a total of 14,592 apartments, which shows a proportion of nearly ten persons to each apartment. In 120 houses in this district there are 55,667 persons. In the house at No. 16 Dr. Mendez Alvaro Street, having two floors and an attic, 635 persons are lodged, and in another, at No. 37 Ronda de Segovia, with three floors, there are 665 persons. Fifteen houses in the Latina Hospital and La Inclusa districts hold 6,235 persons. In the so-called hallway houses (tenements), the annual death rate is 50 per thousand. Besides crowding and promiscuity, we must take into account the lack of light and air in these houses in which the lower middle and the poor classes live or, rather, die. The complete lack of ventilation causes the residents to feel even more tired when they get up than when they went to bed. The average life expectation among workers is thirty years; in the well-to-do classes, fifty years. These things happen, according to Dr. Milla, because in Spain problems related to health and life are not properly studied. A senator stated recently that in the Spanish army ten millions are spent annually on music and only eight millions on sanitation. Dr. Milla suggests as a solution to the problem of securing healthful, cheap houses for the masses, a law providing for compulsory expropriation of any urban land not in use at present. This land could be sold afterward at the actual purchase price plus the interest on the funds spent.

Sanitary Survey by the King of Spain

Las Hurdes is an extensive area of poor land enclosed by rocky mountains, in the western part of Spain, in the provinces of Caceres and Salamanca. This region has been much studied throughout the centuries. It has been a subject coming up repeatedly for discussion at congresses, which have proposed varied solutions of the problems of poverty and disease arising in this great expanse of stony and rocky ground where practically the only living creatures are the malaria germ and its vector, the mosquito. At one of these congresses, the inability of Spanish statesmen to remedy our evils was exemplified, since one of the most cultured among them, Sr. Moret, suggested that the best way to redeem Las Hurdes was to install telephones there. At any rate, Las Hurdes has continued to be a neglected spot, with a few decaying villages scattered here and there. Hunger, malaria, destroying and atrophying the race from the oldest times, myxedema and tuberculosis have cooperated with the poverty of the land and the rough climate further to depopulate that stony area. Dr. Marañón, physician of the Public Assistance of Madrid, Dr. Goyanes, surgeon of the same organization, and Dr. Bardají, provincial inspector of Salamanca, only a few months ago made a visit to Las Hurdes, and put on record their impressions in a report on file in the central office of public health. Man is disappearing from Las Hurdes from exhaustion. If any human beings are left, this is because foundling asylums send their inmates there. These are welcomed by the villagers, anxious to receive the small subsidy paid by the government for the care of these children.

At a banquet attended by the king and by scientists, such as Ramón y Cajal, and Dr. Marañón, reference was made to Las Hurdes, and the king expressed a desire to do something for this small number of Spanish subjects so much in need of protection and charity. Dr. Marañón, who had just visited the region, suggested to the king the advantage of his making a direct survey of Las Hurdes, a thing never before done by any Spanish king. The king, who never spares himself when the public welfare is concerned, welcomed the idea, and a few days afterward all Spain learned with pleasure that the king was on his way to Las Hurdes. Public officials were not so well pleased, not taking kindly to the idea of a horseback trip of more than 60 miles through rocky mountain paths, having for its only purpose the survey of places so far only visited by poor village priests. Nevertheless, the king visited Las Hurdes. In five days, he covered more than 60 miles on horseback under a burning sun and in unbearable heat, as the climate is virtually torrid, snatching just enough sleep in army tents in the field to give a semblance of rest. In his inspection, the king and his escort saw lands parched through centuries of aridity; mountain torrents which break down and carry along rocks when it rains, but which bring no moisture to the land, which, because of its sloping character, becomes dry a few minutes after a flood; vast mountains without a single growing plant, and at the bottom of the valleys swampy ground where anopheles breed and intestinal parasites keep alive infection. When, perchance, a man was found, he was either hungry or malarial. Some of the people are cretins. It is now intended to solve the Las Hurdes problem, creating a commission charged with the special duty of supervising that region, and undertaking especially its sanitary improvement.

BUENOS AIRES

(From Our Regular Correspondent)

Aug. 18, 1922.

Enlargement of the Medical School

• At a recent meeting at the medical school, attended, at the invitation of the dean, by several physicians who are members of congress, it was agreed to ask the national government to turn over to the school the four squares that surround the Hospital de Clínicas, which have already been expropriated in order to construct the Polyclinic Hospital, planned for several years. It is intended to preserve the present streets, thus eliminating the chief obstacle to the construction of the new hospitals. Several institutes relatively independent will be built. The intention is to provide Buenos Aires with hospitals as complete as the best in the world, in order that this city may become a first-class medical center.

Smallpox

Although the epidemic is subsiding, smallpox has not completely disappeared from Cordoba. Isolated cases have appeared in other provinces, especially Salta, where there is a small focus.

Federal Powers and Public Health

Our federal constitution endows each province with a large degree of autonomy, which naturally extends to the supervision and preservation of public health. But, in practice, as soon as an epidemic breaks out, they are compelled to ask assistance from the national government, either because of lack of the necessary sanitary resources or because these are not sufficient. However, as a rule, national assistance is requested only after the epidemics have become serious, because their spontaneous subsidence was expected, or the campaign against them has been poorly conducted. This gives rise to a real danger that such epidemics may spread to other regions. In order to obviate this difficulty, the national

authorities intend to submit to congress a law authorizing the direct intervention of the government in matters related to public health throughout the country.

Conflict in the Charities Association

The large sums derived from the national lottery and other appropriations from the national government are devoted to the maintenance of the activities and hospitals conducted by the National Society of Charities. This association is directed by a group of society women, and its religious tendency is very marked. For a long time, this system has caused no protests, but little by little the number of persons against it is increasing. Several reasons are advanced against the continuation of the present system. Last year, the Argentine Medical Association protested against the public beds offered in the hospitals operated by the Charities Association, claiming that well-to-do-patients were admitted to them and thus the surgeons' business suffered. At a meeting of the directing board of the Charities Association, one of the most prominent Argentine surgeons, Dr. Belaustegui, stated that he did not favor the present organization, because of its old-fashioned tendencies. The president of the association admonished Dr. Belaustegui, who, rather than submit to any pressure, resigned as a surgeon of the Rivadavia Hospital, in which he had practiced for twenty-five years, with much success. This event has caused many protests on the part of physicians and even the public. It may be stated without exaggeration that this case is the most powerful argument so far presented against the present system. All this suggests that in a few years a change will be brought about by the growing pressure, due to public opinion.

BUCHAREST

(From Our Regular Correspondent)

Aug. 30, 1922.

Vienna Professors Leaving the University

A Vienna University lecturer who has had twenty-two years' continuous work in pathologic anatomy, and who has left Vienna and the university because he is unable to support himself and his family from his income, made the following statements:

The economical situation created by the war inflicts the greatest burden on the representatives of science. While some classes are abounding in worldly goods, the members of the middle class, teachers, officials, professors and physicians, suffer unimaginable misery. The financial evils have forced the most eminent professors of Vienna University to resign because they cannot see their families suffer from hunger. The position of university professors was not enviable in peace times. The great mental effort expended was out of all proportion to the small salary received; but they waited for better times. Since the war, most salaries have risen with the rising prices; only the salary of the university professor has remained below the level adequate for comfortable living. The total income of a Vienna professor in peace times (excepting, of course, professors of medicine and surgery, who had excellent salaries) was 12,000 crowns; that is, about \$2,400. Today, it does not amount to 600,000 crowns, although every workman makes at least 1,200,000 kronen a year (one dollar is worth about 6,000 kronen in Vienna). The raising of salaries was contemplated, but instead a reduction is in prospect. Under the circumstances, it is impossible to live decently, or even less than decently. They cannot contemplate adding to their libraries or buying special journals, but are even forced to sell their books and scientific instruments in order to buy bread.

Those who could not endure the struggle long ago left this city of misery and luxury. Foreigners have received